

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Pasadena Symphony Association**  
**Pasadena Symphony & POPS**  
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For full artist bios and high res images visit: <https://pasadenasympphony-pops.org/rhapsody-on-a-theme-of-paganini-press-release/>

**PASADENA SYMPHONY PRESENTS RACHMANINOFF, ELGAR AND A JOURNEY TO THE MOON  
AS PART OF THE CALIFORNIA FESTIVAL**

**Pasadena, CA** – The Pasadena Symphony continues its 96<sup>th</sup> season with **Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini** on **Saturday, November 18, 2023** with performances at **2:00pm** and **8:00pm** at **Ambassador Auditorium**. This concert is part of the unprecedented **California Festival**, a two-week statewide music showcase spotlighting the most innovative composers of works written in the past five years. Opening the concert is **Patrick Harlin’s Earthrise**, inspired by the iconic photo taken by astronaut Bill Anders on the first-ever trip around the moon. As part of the Festival, **Harlin** will join **KUSC’s Brian Lauritzen** for the free pre-concert discussion, *Insights*, one hour prior to each performance.

An enthusiastic collaborator of new music and Patrick Harlin in particular, **Grammy-nominated conductor Ward Stare** will take the podium for this mesmerizing program. Stare and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra released the world premiere recording of Harlin’s *Rapture* on the Grammy-nominated *American Rapture* album in 2019. Praised by *The New York Times* for “inspiring musicians to impressive heights,” Stare will lead the orchestra on an awe-filled journey through this program of mystery and intrigue, concluding with **Elgar’s Enigma Variations**.

The program centers around **Rachmaninoff’s** virtuosic **Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini** performed by award-winning pianist **Natasha Paremski**. With playing described as “fiery and widely dynamic” by *London Classical Source*, Paremski performs this diabolically difficult rhapsody with a “flair for the way Rachmaninoff must be played” (*Chicago Tribune*). A recipient of the prestigious Gilmore Young Artists prize at age of 18, Natasha continues to generate excitement from all corners as she wins over international audiences with her musical sensibility and flawless technique.

The Pasadena Symphony provides a vibrant experience specially designed for the music lover, the social butterfly or a date night out. Arrive early for the pre-concert discussion *Insights*, or

enjoy a bite or a glass in the Symphony Lounge, a posh setting along Ambassador Auditorium's beautiful outdoor plaza with a full service beverage center serving coffee, spirits and fine wines from The Michero Family, plus music before the concert and during intermission.

All concerts are held at Ambassador Auditorium, 131 South St. John Ave, Pasadena, CA. Subscription packages start at as low as \$99, with single tickets starting at \$42. Both may be purchased online at [www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org](http://www.pasadenasympphony-pops.org) or by calling (626) 793-7172.

#### IF YOU GO:

- **What:** The Pasadena Symphony presents Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini  
**Ward Stare**, conductor  
**Natasha Paremski**, piano  

<b>Patrick Harlin</b>	Earthrise
<b>Rachmaninoff</b>	Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
<b>Elgar</b>	Enigma Variations
- **When:** Saturday, November 18, 2023 at 2:00pm and 8:00pm
- **Where:** Ambassador Auditorium | 131 South St. John Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105
- **Cost:** Tickets start at \$42.00
- **Parking:** Valet parking is available on St. John Ave for \$15. General parking is available in two locations: next to the Auditorium (entrance on St. John Ave) at the covered parking structure for \$10 and directly across the street at the Wells Fargo parking structure (entrance on Terrace at Green St). ADA parking is located at the above-ground parking lot adjacent to the Auditorium (entrance on St. John Ave.) for \$10. Parking may be pre-purchased or purchased onsite. **Parking purchased onsite is cash only.**

#### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

##### **Ward Stare** **Conductor**

Grammy-nominated conductor Ward Stare, hailed by the *Chicago Tribune* as “A rising-star in the conducting firmament,” was Music Director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra from 2014 – 2021. He has been praised for “inspiring musicians to impressive heights” by *The New York Times*, and as “a dynamic music director” by *Rochester CITY Newspaper*. In demand as a guest conductor, Stare has conducted the Symphony Orchestras of Baltimore, Sydney

(Australia), Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (Germany), Pittsburgh, Grant Park (Chicago), Atlanta, Detroit, Toronto as well as the New World Symphony and Calgary Philharmonic.

Stare made his debut with the Metropolitan Opera in 2017, conducting nine performances of Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow*, with Grammy-winning mezzo-soprano Susan Graham in the title role. Stare's frequent collaborations with the Lyric Opera of Chicago began in 2012, conducting a production of *Hansel and Gretel*, returning in 2013 for *Die Fledermaus*, and again in 2014 to lead *Porgy and Bess* to rave reviews. Stare served as resident conductor of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra from 2008 to 2012, and in 2009, made his highly successful Carnegie Hall debut with the orchestra, stepping in to lead H.K. Gruber's *Frankenstein*. Stare has enjoyed an ongoing relationship with the SLSO and returns frequently as a guest.

As a passionate advocate for arts education, Ward Stare has served as a Distinguished Artist at the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University since 2012. In the fall of 2016, Stare recorded Concerto for Violin, Rock Band and String Orchestra, by R.E.M. bassist and songwriter Mike Mills, with the ensemble and its founder, Robert McDuffie. Stare is an enthusiastic collaborator and performer of new music, including the world premiere performance of *Pravda*, by Academy Award-winning composer Elliot Goldenthal and the regional premiere of Pulitzer Prize and Grammy Award-winning composer Aaron Jay Kernis' Flute Concerto, performed by Marina Piccinini.

In the Spring of 2019, Stare and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra released *American Rapture*, featuring the world-premiere recordings of Jennifer Higdon's Harp Concerto, with Yolanda Kondonassis as soloist, and Patrick Harlin's Rapture. The album garnered two Grammy nominations, with Higdon's Harp Concerto winning the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. Ward Stare was trained as a trombonist at The Juilliard School in Manhattan. At 18, he was appointed principal trombonist of the Lyric Opera of Chicago and has performed as an orchestral musician with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, among others. As a soloist, he has concertized in both the U.S. and Europe.

## **Natasha Paremski**

### **Piano**

With her consistently striking and dynamic performances, pianist Natasha Paremski reveals astounding virtuosity and voracious interpretive abilities. She continues to generate excitement from all corners as she wins over audiences with her musical sensibility and powerful, flawless virtuosity.

Natasha is a regular return guest of many major orchestras, including Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Grant Park Festival, Winnipeg Symphony, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Elgin Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with whom she has performed every year since 2008 in venues such as Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, and Cadogan Hall. She has

performed with major orchestras in North America including Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Houston Symphony, NAC Orchestra in Ottawa, Nashville Symphony. She has toured extensively in Europe with such orchestras as Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchester, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Orchestre de Bretagne, the Orchestre de Nancy, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Tonhalle Orchester in Zurich, Moscow Philharmonic, under the direction of conductors including Thomas Dausgaard, Peter Oundjian, Andres Orozco-Estrada, Jeffrey Kahane, James Gaffigan, JoAnn Falletta, Fabien Gabel, Rossen Milanov and Andrew Litton. In addition, she has toured with Gidon Kremer and the Kremerata Baltica in Latvia, Benelux, the United Kingdom and Austria as well as appearances with National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra in Taipei.

Natasha has given recitals at the Auditorium du Louvre in Paris, Wigmore Hall, Schloss Elmau, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, Verbier Festival, San Francisco Performances, Seattle's Meany Hall, Kansas City's Harriman Jewell Series, Santa Fe's Lensic Theater, Ludwigshafen BASF Series, Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Tokyo's Musashino Performing Arts Center and on the Rising Stars Series of Gilmore and Ravinia Festivals.

A passionate chamber musician, Natasha is a regular recital partner of Grammy winning cellist Zuill Bailey, with whom she has recorded a number of CDs. Their Britten album on Telarc debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Classical Chart, remaining there for a number of weeks, in addition to being featured on The New York Times Playlist. She has been a guest of many chamber music festivals such as Jeffrey Kahane's Green Music Center ChamberFest, the Lockenhaus, Toronto, Sitka Summer Music, and Cape Cod Chamber Music festivals to name a few.

Natasha was awarded several prestigious prizes at a very young age, including the Gilmore Young Artists prize in 2006 at the age of eighteen, the Prix Montblanc in 2007, the Orpheum Stiftung Prize in Switzerland. In September 2010, she was awarded the Classical Recording Foundation's Young Artist of the Year. Her first recital album was released in 2011 to great acclaim, topping the Billboard Classical Charts, and was re-released on the Steinway & Sons label in September 2016 featuring Islamey recorded on Steinway's revolutionary new Spirio technology. In 2012 she recorded Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Rachmaninoff's Paganini Rhapsody with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Fabien Gabel on the orchestra's label distributed by Naxos.

With a strong focus on new music, Natasha's growing repertoire reflects an artistic maturity beyond her years. In the 2010-11 season, she played the world premiere of a sonata written for her by Gabriel Kahane, which was also included in her solo album.

Natasha continues to extend her performance activity and range beyond the traditional concert hall. In December 2008, she was the featured pianist in choreographer Benjamin Millepied's Dances Concertantes at New York's Joyce Theater. She was featured in a major two-part film for BBC Television on the life and work of Tchaikovsky, shot on location in St. Petersburg, performing excerpts from Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and other works. In the winter of

2007, Natasha participated along with Simon Keenlyside in the filming of *Twin Spirits*, a project starring Sting and Trudie Styler that explores the music and writing of Robert and Clara Schumann, which was released on DVD. She has performed in the project live several times with the co-creators in New York and the U.K., directed by John Caird, the original director/adaptor of the musical *Les Misérables*.

Natasha began her piano studies at the age of four with Nina Malikova at Moscow's Andreyev School of Music. She then studied at San Francisco Conservatory of Music before moving to New York to study with Pavlina Dokovska at Mannes College of Music, from which she graduated in 2007. Natasha made her professional debut at age nine with El Camino Youth Symphony in California. At the age of fifteen she debuted with Los Angeles Philharmonic and recorded two discs with Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. Born in Moscow, Natasha moved to the United States at the age of eight, becoming a U.S. citizen shortly thereafter, and is now based in New York where she is Artistic Director of the New York Piano Society, a non-profit organization that supports pianists whose professions lie outside of music.

### **Patrick Harlin** **Composer**

Patrick Harlin's "aesthetics capture a sense of tradition and innovation..." (*The New York Times*). His music is permeated by classical, jazz, and electronic music traditions, all underpinned with a love and respect for the great outdoors. His works have been performed by the St. Louis Symphony, Kansas City Symphony, the Rochester and Calgary Philharmonic Orchestras, Collegium Cincinnati, and Calidore String Quartet, among others. Patrick was recently chosen as the inaugural composer in residence with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra (2019-2022).

Patrick's interdisciplinary research in soundscape ecology—a field that aims to better understand ecosystems through sound—has taken him to imperiled regions around the world, including the Amazon rainforest and the Book Cliffs of Utah. His baseline recordings for ecological impact studies are also the fodder for artistic inspiration. These pieces draw parallels between the sounds of the natural world and those of the concert hall, seeking to bring awareness to the importance of sound in our environment.

Patrick's work in this field has been supported by a Graham Sustainability Institute Doctoral Fellowship, Theodore Presser Award, and a University of Michigan Predoctoral Fellowship, resulting in an ongoing body of works called *The Wilderness Anthology*.

Recent CD releases include *American Rapture* by the Rochester Philharmonic, *Wind Cave* on GVSU's Dawn Chorus Album, *My Time is Now* featuring #tbt and the premiere recording using George Gershwin's Steinway piano, and *River of Doubt* with the Atlantic Classical Orchestra.

Patrick holds a B.Mus from Western Washington University, and an M.M. and D.M.A. from the University of Michigan. He has studied with Alexei Girsh, Roger Briggs, Evan Chambers, Bright Sheng, and Michael Daugherty. He was raised in Seattle, Washington, and is currently an

adjunct faculty member at the University of Michigan.

## **ABOUT THE PASADENA SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION**

Formed in 1928, the Pasadena Symphony and POPS is an ensemble of Hollywood's most talented, sought after musicians. With extensive credits in the film, television, recording and orchestral industries, the artists of Pasadena Symphony and POPS are the most heard in the world.

The Pasadena Symphony and POPS performs in two of the most extraordinary venues in the United States: Ambassador Auditorium, known as the *Carnegie Hall of the West*, and the luxuriant Los Angeles Arboretum & Botanic Garden. The multi-platinum-selling, two-time Emmy and five-time Grammy Award-nominated entertainer dubbed "The Ambassador of the Great American Songbook," Michael Feinstein, leads the POPS as Principal Pops Conductor, succeeding Marvin Hamlisch.

A hallmark of its robust education programs, the Pasadena Symphony Association has served the youth of the region for over five decades through the Pasadena Youth Symphony Orchestras (PYSO) comprised of seven performing ensembles, with over 400 gifted 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students from all over Southern California. The PYSO Symphony has performed at venues across the globe as well as on the television show *GLEE*.

The PSA provides people from all walks of life with powerful access points to the world of symphonic music.

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